

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 16870 130406Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 IO-14 ISO-00 INSE-00 AID-05 EB-08
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6171
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UNCLAS BANGKOK 16870

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: PAN AMERICAN INTEREST IN ASSUMING ICEM FUNCTIONS FOR
REFUGEE TRAVEL

REF: (A) BANGKOK 14019; (B) BANGKOK 14909

1. SUMMARY: LOCAL PAN AMERICAN DIRECTOR CALLED ON EMBASSY TO INDICATE STRONG INTEREST OF PAN AM IN ASSUMING ICEM TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION FUNCTIONS FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES DESTINED FOR THE UNITED STATES SHOULD A CHANGE BE MADE FROM PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS. EMBASSY OFFICERS ASSURED HIM THAT DECISIONS WOULD BE MADE IN WASHINGTON RATHER THAN BANGKOK AND NOT TAKEN UNTIL PAN AM AND OTHER INTERESTED US CARRIERS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR PROPOSALS. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING UP ON A JUNE 8 LETTER TO US, MR. F.C. BERGER, PAN AMERICAN DIRECTOR FOR THAILAND, LAOS, AND BURMA, CALLED ON THE EMBASSY TO EXPRESS PAN AM'S INTEREST IN BIDDING TO REPLACE ICEM IN THE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS IF THE US GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO SEEK ALTERNATIVES. BERGER SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD OF THE CONTINENTAL PROPOSAL
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(REF A) AND HE WANTED TO BE SURE THE EMBASSY UNDERSTOOD THAT PAN AM WAS INTERESTED ALSO, THOUGH A FORMAL PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE TO WAIT FOR BETTER PAN AM UNDERSTANDING OF FUNCTIONS THAT ICEM CURRENTLY HANDLES.

3. EMBASSY TOLD BERGER THAT CONSIDERATION OF

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO ICEM IS IN A PRELIMINARY PHASE AND THAT THE FINAL DECISION WOULD BE MADE IN WASHINGTON RATHER THAN BANGKOK. IN ANY EVENT, NONE WOULD BE TAKEN UNTIL PAN AM HAS HAD A REASONABLE MAOUNT OF TIME TO DEVELOP AND PRESENT ITS PROPOSAL. WE EXPLAINED TO BERGER THE GENERAL FUNCTIONS WHICH ICEM NOW CARRIES OUT. HE PLANS TO PROVIDE THE EMBASSY WITH ANOTHER LETTER IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS INDICATING PAN AM INTEREST IN GENERAL TERMS, AND HOPES TO MEET WITH LOWMAN IF THE LATTER HAS TIME DURING HIS VISIT.

4. BERGER EXPRESSED SOME DOUBT THAT CONTINENTAL COULD ASSUME ALL OF ICEM'S FUNCTIONS (EXCEPT MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS) ON A NO FEE BASIS, BUT SAID THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO STUDY ICEM'S OPERATION MORE THOROUGHLY BEFORE MAKING A FINAL ASSESSMENT.

5. WE WILL POUCH THE JUNE 8 LETTER FROM BERGER AND SUBSEQUENT CORRESPONDENCE TO THE DEPARTMENT, ATTENTION: HA (CUSHING).
WHITEHOUSE

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